



Teaching Skills and Hope through Christ

BY LOIS ENGFELDER, LHM GRANTS MANAGER, WITH CHERI FISH, MISSION EDITOR



Poverty, sickness, and violence are everyday occurrences in Cameroon and Kenya; situations which affect millions of people. Because of this tragic cycle, young women are often left with little or no education, forcing them to make money for their families in any way possible. The LWML grant, “Mission Outreach to At-Risk Young Women in Africa” through Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM), is changing lives and bringing them

the message of hope and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

LHM’s initiatives in Cameroon reach out to young women and provide vocational training and guidance from a Christian perspective, helping them live healthy lives in a secular world. LHM’s holistic outreach program touches the lives of abandoned, unwed mothers, and victims of sexual abuse by offering vocational training, along with hope in Jesus Christ. The young women (ages 12–25) receive counseling as well as social and spiritual support by Christian women who work together towards rehabilitating the women in need. Through the help of volunteer experts, the young women are taught skills such as sewing and cloth-making. Sharing the Gospel through these training programs allows LHM to educate them in a practical skill that helps them provide for their families while learning more about the ways God loves and cares for them.

Fadimatou* — a 15-year-old, jobless, mother — dropped out of school at an early age and was forced into marriage with an older man. After giving birth, she faced hardship and abuse from him. She heard about LHM’s teen mother program through an ad on the radio and registered for their sewing program. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, she has started attending morning devotions,

despite the fear and risk of facing rejection from her Muslim family. She now faces the challenge of restoring her freedom and dignity, while looking forward to a total transformation of her life and hope in Jesus.

LHM’s Reaching Rahab program in Kenya also provides Christ-centered and holistic outreach ministry for urban young women, rescuing them from lives on the streets or in prison. The program rehabilitates them through counseling and vocational training, disrupting the cycle of poverty and prostitution, and teaches the women income-producing trades that can provide economic independence.

“These programs are truly transformative, with women graduating with a marketable skill, empowered to change their lives. They gain lifelong benefit from the fellowship they share with other students and the confidence in knowing that God has provided this care and training for them,” says Eric Gates, LHM’s Regional Director for Africa and the Middle East.

Women as young as 17, along with their infants or young children, often spend months in prison, as they await trial for petty crimes like selling wares without a license. While incarcerated, LHM-Kenya, in collaboration with prison chaplains, reaches them through in-prison ministries. The Gospel is shared with them, and many are received into the program upon their release from prison. Through LHM’s Reaching Rahab program, young mothers learn a skill, such as soap-making or hairdressing, that they can use to provide for their families. And, through counseling and Bible studies, they understand that God never abandons them, even in extremely difficult times.

LHM is grateful to the LWML for this mission grant. Thank you for helping us reach more young women and connecting them to faith in Jesus Christ as well as equip them in skills through practical training programs. Q

**Name changed to protect her identity*